

Lincolnshire ICB NHS England Optometry Hypertension Case Finding Service Pilot



Background

Hypertension remains one of the leading preventable causes of cardiovascular disease, stroke and dementia in the UK. Undiagnosed hypertension contributes significantly to premature mortality and health inequalities.

To address this, NHS Lincolnshire ICB was successful in securing funding for a Hypertension Case Finding Service pilot within optometry and dental practices, aligning with NHS England's target to diagnose 80% of people with high blood pressure by 2024/25.

Purpose

- Contribute to reducing premature mortality in Lincolnshire.
- Increase detection of undiagnosed hypertension.
- Target individuals who infrequently attend general practice.
- Increase accessibility to blood pressure (BP) testing in deprived and rural areas.
- Promote self-care and healthy lifestyle awareness.
- Reduce pressure on GP and secondary care through earlier detection.
- Support NHS Long Term Plan ambitions to prevent 150,000 heart attacks, strokes and dementia cases by 2028/29.

Evidence of Impact

- Two optometry practices participated in the 10 month pilot.
- 64 people were offered a blood pressure check of which 42 accepted. All included lifestyle advice conversations.
- 50% of these were signposted to their GP or community pharmacy for further monitoring.
- Six people were found to have very high readings requiring urgent same-day onward referral.
- Over 95% of patients said they were likely or highly likely to recommend the service.

Key Learnings

Optometry-based blood pressure screening can be implemented rapidly within existing infrastructure, requiring minimal additional training and equipment. The model complements community pharmacy hypertension services and supports the wider cardiovascular disease (CVD) prevention goals.

Risks, Limitations and Interdependencies

- Requires consistent referral and communication pathways with GPs and pharmacies.
- Patients who regularly attend their optical practice often expect their optometrist to be informed about the outcomes of any onward referrals.
- Training needs to be available so new staff members can access anytime.
- Capacity across optometry practices to provide a walk-in service is variable.
- Availability of Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring (ABPM) within community pharmacies can be limited due to equipment constraints, impacting timely follow-up.
- Opportunity for additional signposting to other prevention services such as weight management.

Patient Quotes

"Very helpful, informative and reassuring."

"Great to be able to get these checks outside of primary medical care."

"Brilliant initiative to check problems before they cause significant health issues."

Supporting Information

[NICE NG136: Hypertension in adults: diagnosis and management](#)

NHS Long Term Plan (2019)

Lincolnshire ICB Hypertension Case Finding SOP (May 2025)

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